



Dear Enlisted Member:

I am pleased to present you with a report on the First Annual Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum, which was held at the Pentagon, June 2000. Seventy-nine E-9s and 60 spouses represented you, the backbone of our Total Force—Active, National Guard and Reserve. The Forum was an important step forward in our ongoing efforts to enhance communication and improve the quality of life for you and your families who serve our nation so well.

Mrs. Cohen and I had two principal reasons for inviting these representatives to Washington. First, we wanted to recognize and acknowledge the special trust and responsibility they hold as defenders of the security of our Nation. We were able to thank them firsthand for their leadership and many contributions to America's military. Second, we wanted to initiate a process for conducting face-to-face dialogues about the most pressing quality of life challenges facing our Total Force and reacting appropriately and constructively to those issues.

The report gives an overview of the Forum, summarizes key issues identified by the participants, and reviews the Department's responses and follow-up actions now being taken. The value of using the interactive setting to exchange information, capture concerns, and offer initial answers is immeasurable and I hope that we have set a tone and standard for others to follow in the future.

In order to maintain America's military as a standard of excellence, we will continue to rely on your advice, leadership, motivation and dedication. On behalf of the entire Department of Defense, thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Cohen", written over a horizontal line.



Forum Overview

Senior enlisted advisors with a combined 2,000 years of NCO experience, and their spouses, attended the Secretary of Defense's First Annual Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum. These trusted advisors gathered to converse with senior

DoD leadership about the challenges faced by today's enlisted personnel, and to discuss DoD's efforts to address the key issues affecting the quality of life and readiness of the force. Seventy-nine E-9's and 60 spouses took part in the day-long session of information sharing and cooperative problem-solving.

"We commend you and your family for your outstanding service, sacrifice, and dedication."

***—Secretary of Defense
William S. Cohen***

The impressive gathering, which included representatives from every enlisted component—Active, Reserve, and National Guard—was also assembled to receive the gratitude of the Department of Defense for their continued leadership, commitment, and excellence in service to our country.

The Honorable Bernard Rostker, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and

Readiness opened the Forum by welcoming the participants, and Mr. Brian Sheridan spoke on key foreign policy issues on behalf of the Honorable Walter Slocombe, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. The senior enlisted advisors and spouses were also treated to a lively presentation on combating terrorism by Brigadier General John Sattler, USMC, Deputy Director of Operations, Joint Staff.

Following the introductory remarks, the senior enlisted advisors for each

Service were briefed on, and given the opportunity to discuss, issues of concern to each specific Service. Spouses participated in a Quality of Life Panel moderated by Mr. Victor Vasquez, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy.

General Richard B. Myers, USAF, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, seated here with Mrs. Cohen, hosted a luncheon to honor the senior enlisted and spouses. In commending military personnel and their families, he said, "We've got to make sure they've got the tangible thanks of a grateful nation, not just our grateful words. We're working hard to make that come true."



Participants of the 1st Annual Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum are greeted at the Pentagon River Entrance by Vice Admiral Greg Johnson, U.S. Navy, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) Charles Cragin. Johnson is the Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense.





After lunch, Secretary Cohen greeted attendees and welcomed them to participate in small groups held on five issue areas: Child Care; Compensation; Health Care/TRICARE; Recruitment and Retention; and Schools, Education, and Quality

of Life Issues. Each participant had the opportunity to attend three different sessions in which they were invited to share concerns and suggest solutions.

DoD subject matter experts were present in each session to address questions, offer information, and most importantly, to hear from the NCOs and spouses the concerns of enlisted personnel. The issues identified in these sessions are presented in the following pages.



representatives, and one spouse gave an outbrief to the Secretary of Defense on the key issues in each topic area.

Secretary Cohen responded to these issues, in part, by saying, "We can serve you well when we hear what you need."

A reception and dinner, hosted by the Cohens, served as a final opportunity to honor the service and sacrifice of our Senior Enlisted personnel and to thank them for their dedication.



"(We have) the finest military in the world...And the rest of us are grateful beneficiaries."

—Mrs. Janet Langhart Cohen

In the forum's closing, the Secretary of Defense heard from the senior enlisted. Service

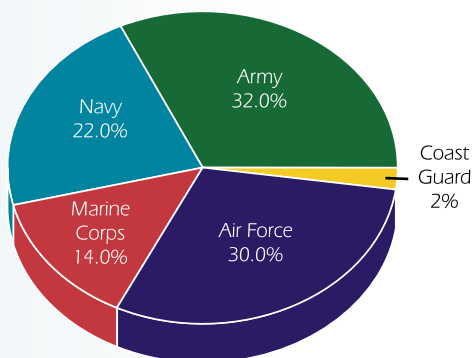


Enlisted Personnel

Senior Enlisted Advisor Forum Participants

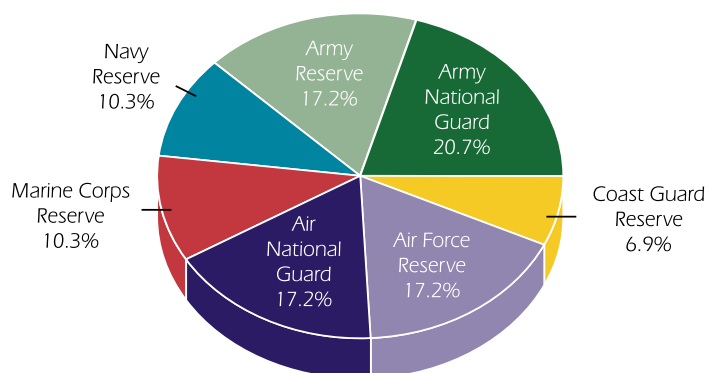
E-9 participants represented the enlisted personnel of all services, including both active duty and reserves. A total of 79 senior enlisted advisors and 60 spouses attended the Forum. Forum participants came from 59 worldwide bases or operating locations to share ideas, expertise and issues of concern.

Active Duty Senior Enlisted
(n=50)



Service Branch	Senior Enlisted	Spouses
Army	16	10
Navy	11	9
Marine Corps	7	5
Air Force	15	13
Coast Guard	1	0
Total	50	37

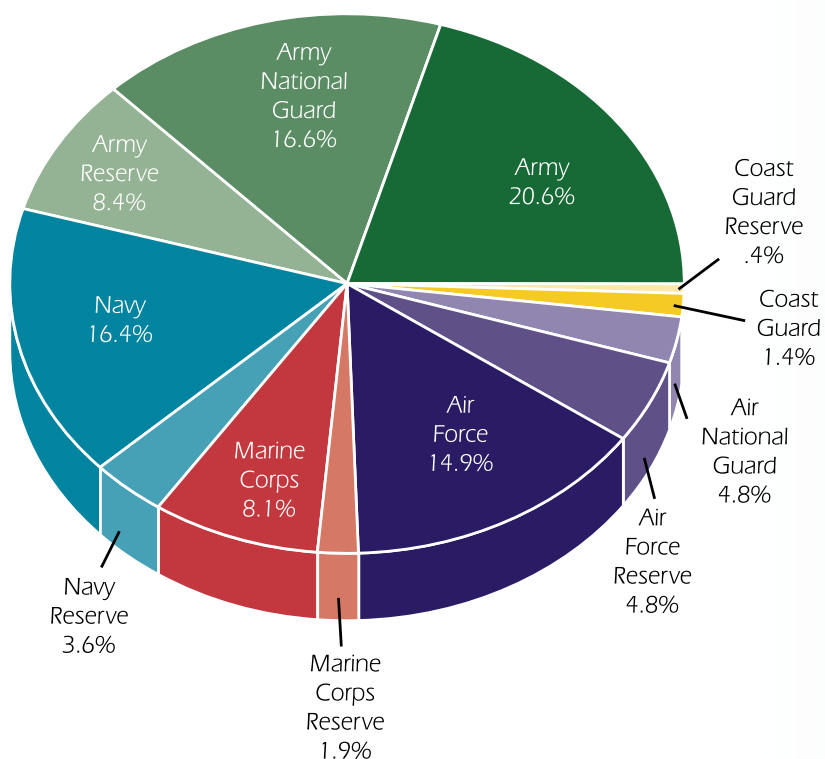
Reserve Senior Enlisted
(n=29)



Reserve Component	Senior Enlisted	Spouses
Army National Guard	6	6
Army Reserve	5	3
Navy Reserve	3	3
Marine Corps Reserve	3	1
Air National Guard	5	4
Air Force Reserve	5	4
Coast Guard Reserve	2	2
Total	29	23

Total Enlisted Force

The United States armed forces are comprised of more than 1.8 million enlisted active duty and reserve personnel.



Service Branch	Enlisted
Army	396,155
Navy	314,286
Marine Corps	154,830
Air Force	286,170
Coast Guard	27,397
Total	1,178,838

Reserve Component	Enlisted
Army National Guard	319,161
Army Reserve	161,930
Navy Reserve	69,999
Marine Corps Reserve	35,947
Air National Guard	92,424
Air Force Reserve	55,557
Coast Guard Reserve	6,808
Total	741,826